

SECTION 2

COUNTRY HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

2.1 SOCIOECONOMIC SITUATION

Table 1: Key Socioeconomic Development Indicators

Indicator	Value
Total Population (2006)	1 215 619
% under 15 (2006)	23.7%
Population Urbanized (%) (2006)	43.4
Life expectancy at birth (2006)	68.9 (M), 75.7 (F)
Gross National Income (GNI) per capita US\$ (2006)	5450
Adult (+15) literacy rate (2006)	84.3%
Human Development Index Rank (out of 177 countries) (2006)	65
Human Poverty Index Rank (out of 108 countries) (2006)	27
% population with sustainable access to improved sanitation (2004)	100%

Sources: Annual Health Statistics 2006, Ministry of Health & Quality of Life, Human Development Report 2006. Central Statistics Office 2006, Ministry of Education & Human Resources

With a per capita income of about US\$ 260 at the time of independence in 1968, Mauritius emerged from an under-developed economy to that of an upper middle income economy. In 2006 Mauritius had a per capita income of US\$ 6431 or \$11 643 in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms. Mauritius witnessed a shift from a mono-crop agricultural economy to an export-led oriented manufacturing economy, with a buoyant tourism and service sector. At the crossroad of its development path, Mauritius is in the midst of a structural reform programme to diversify the current “four-pillar” economy.

Economic growth rates, which averaged 5.7% annually during the ten-year period (1986-1996) slowed down to 4.5% in the following ten year period (1996-2006). The economy of Mauritius is expected to grow by 5.8% and 6.0% in 2008 and 2009, respectively.

Human Development Index (HIS) and Human Poverty

The past decade saw Mauritius sustaining its position among the first 20 “Medium Human Development” countries, ranking 65th in 2007. Concurrently, the HDI for Mauritius rose from 0.772 to 0.804.

With a Human Poverty Index of 11.4, Mauritius ranked 27th out of 108 developing countries. The last two household budget surveys showed a significant improvement in equality